

CloudWater Zendo, the Zen Center of Cleveland

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Abbot: Ven. Shih Ying-Fa Assistant Abbot: Ven. Shih Ming-Xing

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Introduction to Zen Meditation: Mondays at 7:00 p.m.

Group Zen Meditation: Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.,

Saturday at 8:30 a.m., Sunday at 9:00 a.m.

Qigong Class: Saturday at 9:30 a.m.

Sundays: Buddhist Services at 10:00 a.m. 3 Sundays Per Month.

5 Elements Practice Group: Selected Sundays at 11:00 a.m.,

For more schedule information go to:

<http://www.cloudwater.org/cal/calendar.pl>.

AFFILIATED SANGHAS

Golden Wisdom Zen Meditation of Canton and Akron (Canton, OH)

Leader: Ven. Shih Zuan-Dao

Peaceful Lotus Sangha (NE Reintegration Center, Cleveland, OH)

Teacher: Ven. Shih Zhong-Xin

Buddha-Heart Fellowship of Penguin, Tasmania, Australia

Teacher: Ven. Shih Jingang



"A SPARROW SPLASHING" LAUNCHES THIS MONTH

We are pleased to announce the release of a new book by our Dharma brother Venerable Shih Jingang, the teacher at our international affiliate Buddha-Heart Fellowship, located in Tasmania, Australia.

"A Sparrow Splashing" is a journey into the heart of the Buddha's teachings. This book of stories and poetry looks at the life of the author through the eyes of three characters: a child named Little Pebble, a young man called the Seeker, and the Teacher, a Buddhist

Monk. The reader is invited to reflect and meditate upon the universal search for happiness and the nature of suffering. Along the way, desire, anger, ignorance, jealousy and pride are encountered in various forms. This book explores Buddhism, and spirituality in general, beyond sectarian dogma, pointing the way to perfect wisdom and compassion, the essential nature of all beings. The book is available in both paperback and Kindle formats on amazon.com.

First ordained as a Rabjung Monk at the age of 6, and with over 45 years of training and practice, Venerable Jingang draws upon teachings from a range of Mahayana lineages. He is a member of the Nien-Fo Ch'an Order of Buddhist Monks and currently works as a hospital and hospice Chaplain. He also spent over 15 years as a volunteer firefighter. Congratulations, Jingang!

MARCH OF THE BODHISATTVAS

By Ven. Shih Ying-Fa, Abbot



They came by the tens of thousands: veterans of the Vietnam War protests of the 60's and 70s, parents wondering if their children will ever be safe, the teachers for whom education is a labor of love, political agitators and many others. But most especially came the students. Collectively they shared anger and hope, grief and determination, outspokenness and compassion; the students who, with their peers across the nation and around the world, have sparked a revolution.

On Saturday, March 25th, 2018, Public Square in downtown Cleveland, Ohio was transformed from a verdant, stylish public gathering place into an urgent forum whose participants demanded gun control NOW! It was the March For Our Lives, an international wake-up call inspired by the February 14th school massacre in Parkland Florida, the latest of a seemingly unending series of school shootings in the United States.



My decision to attend the March For Our Lives was instantaneous. The moment I heard that there was going to be a sister march in Cleveland, I determined that I was going to go, needed to go. Why? Because the Bodhisattva Path, the Path which urges us to help end the suffering of all sentient beings, demands that we lend support to such an effort. I fully expected that I would be marching alongside myriad Bodhisattvas.

I was not disappointed.



IN OTHER NEWS

- **Sifu Teaching Qigong to Senior Citizens.** Ven. Shih Ying-Fa has begun conducting Qigong classes for people 60 years of age and above at the nearby Gunning Park Recreation Center, 16700 Puritas Avenue in Cleveland. The class is conducted with the support of the Rose Centers for Aging Well, which offers opportunities, programs and services that foster choice and independence. The Rose Centers for Aging Well is a subsidiary of the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging.
 - **Weekday Qigong Class Proposed.** Edan Lamacchia, a Qigong student at the Zendo, is proposing a weekday evening Qigong class. Anyone who is interested in a weekday class should contact Edan at edanjeniffer@yahoo.com.
 - **Yoga Center Dedication This Saturday.** Source Yoga Studio, run by our good Dharma friend Jessica Adams, will conduct a Grand Opening party this Saturday, April 7th, from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Sifu Ying-Fa will conduct a dedication and blessing for the studio as part of the day's activities, which will include free yoga classes and a potluck. Source Yoga Studio is located at 13348 Madison Avenue in Lakewood, OH.
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- **Zendo Visitors in April.** On Sunday, April 8th, Philosophy and Religious Studies students from the University of Mount Union in Alliance, Ohio will visit the Zendo along with their teacher, Doctor Ivory Lyons. On Wednesday, April 18th, Doctor Ellen Posman of Baldwin Wallace University in Berea, Ohio will bring students of Religious Studies to the Zendo.
 - **Sifu To Visit Local High School.** Ven. Shih Ying-Fa will appear as a guest speaker at Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School in Cleveland on Thursday, April 26th. Sifu will talk with a combined group of religious studies students about the Buddhist tradition.
 - **Sifu Assisting College Textbook Author.** Venerable Ying-Fa is currently serving as the Buddhist advisor to Sister Mary Karita Ivancic of Notre Dame College in South Euclid, Ohio. Sister Karita is co-authoring a book on world religions to be used as a text for college-level students.
 - **Buddha's Birthday Celebration on Tuesday, April 10th at 7:00 p.m.** We will commemorate the birth of Siddhartha Gautama in the Lumbini Garden in India. Siddhartha would become the Great Awakened Being known as the Buddha. We'll celebrate with readings, stories, an incense offering, bathing of the Baby Buddha, conversation, and of course, cake!
 - **The Bamboo Grove Presents: "Chanting For Calmness of Mind and Spirit" On Sunday, April 29th at 10:30 a.m.** The practice of chanting has unlimited potential to produce states of calm and peacefulness. Venerable Shih Ying-Fa will instruct us in several types of Buddhist chanting aimed at attaining calmness and focus amidst the clamor of everyday life. Chanting can be most helpful to those who struggle with the current state of affairs in our nation and the overwhelming tide of information to which we are exposed daily. The suggested donation for this workshop is \$5.00 per person.

FROM ASK-A-MONK: FEAR NOT

Q: What happens when we die? I can't get over the anxiety of death and not knowing the unknown. I have always had such a passion for spiritual growth but I have never thought about the possibility of not having an afterlife. This is the first time in my entire life I have lost motivation in my spiritual growth. I want to go back to the way I was before and live life fully, but I am obsessing over death and I am terrified of it. I don't want to feel this way anymore, especially if I were to get sick. I also have a fear of not knowing what the afterlife will be like. How do I actually overcome this fear without just pushing it out of mind.

Shih Ying-Fa: What happens when we die is one of the most commonly-asked questions we humans consider. Being alive and not having experienced what we call "death" yet, this question often confuses us and, sometimes, frightens us, since death is considered to be "the great unknown." But is it really unknown?

All the life we see before us, including our own, has death as its constant partner, the yin to life's yang if you will. Countless numbers of things die in order to sustain our life; plants, animals, microbes, the list goes on and on. So without death, there is no life. Conversely, without life there is no death.

When we begin to view life and death as separate entities instead of components of an ongoing process, we create a lot of anxiety. In Buddhist terms, it is the habitual tendency to divide existence into separate, unrelated components that produces a dualistic view which obscures the true nature of things: that all phenomena are interdependent, interrelated, interpenetrating. This obscuration eventually leads to anxiety and fearfulness since it's difficult to reconcile one "thing" with another "thing."

Of course, this view of phenomena is not something we can figure out with our thinking mind; it must be seen through the eyes of our essential Wisdom, the Wisdom we all possess but which we do not yet fully realize. This is why we Buddhists place such a high value on the practice of meditation.

Through meditation, we learn to release all the preconceived ideas and concepts which inform our view of the world. Once we have begun to loosen our total dependency on the discursive, logical mind we begin to open up new vistas, new ways of seeing our existence. We start to realize that even though we are who we are, the ultimate truth is far beyond mere "personhood." We now begin to appreciate our existence very deeply while realizing that all phenomena in our conditioned realm of existence are impermanent. We view our discretely-existing "self" as just a mental projection and we begin to let go of this view, remembering that hanging on tightly to it only leads to the fear of "losing" it. There's nothing to "lose" and nothing to "gain," and yet all things are manifest.

It is certainly possible to live life fully while acknowledging the interdependence of life and death. This realization IS fullness itself.

From the Buddhist perspective, there is certainly an afterlife; life after life after life after life, in fact. This is why it's so important to lose the view that "I am me and that's that" lest we turn ourselves into some kind of a "Flying Dutchman," convinced that we are doomed to wander the Seven Seas forever without ever finding a port. What goes on is a conglomeration of mistaken mental impulses, to paraphrase the Dalai Lama, not "me."

From our viewpoint, the nature of the "afterlife" is dependent on the thoughts, words and actions of our current life. But if we're too concerned about the afterlife, we are wasting the priceless opportunity to fully experience the life we're living right now. Our mind is divided, which only leads to anxiety and confusion, the sense of never being fully alive. Since all things are interrelated, life and death are the same, so we may as well live this life as mindfully, compassionately, lovingly and wisely as we can. As the inscription on the Wooden Bell at our temple states:

*Birth and death are the Great Matter;
Impermanence is swift;
Time does not wait for anyone;
Do not ignore this chance.*

No need to worry about the way you were before; that "you" has passed. Since we are always in a state of change, we're never the same "person" from moment to moment anyway. Instead, pay mindful attention to the life you're living right now! It can make all the difference. When anxious thoughts of not having an afterlife or obsessing about death arise, there's no need to push them away; just let them go since they're just a series of habitual thought impulses which have no abiding reality whatsoever. Meditation can help you to release such thoughts and to simply concentrate on life as it is in the present moment. This can profoundly change one's view of life....and death.

To ask a question on Ask A Monk, go to <http://www.cloudwater.org/index.php/ask-a-monk-2/ask-a-monk> or access the Zendo home page (<http://www.cloudwater.org/>) and click on the Ask A Monk menu tab.